Lusterless wheat for PDS

480. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government are being pressurized to accept lusterless wheat by certain State Governments for P.D.S.; and

(b) if so, the measures taken to ensure that only edible standard varieties of natural size, shape and colour are purchased for distribution through PDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) Considering the requests received from States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Food Corporation of India (FCI) regarding unseasonal rains affecting wheat slocks during procurement operations, and standing crop in advanced stage of maturity, the Government has allowed procurement of wheat with lustre grains up to a maximum extent of 50% in Punjab and certain districts of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. However, such wheat stocks are will within the refractions of the Uniform Specifications and PFA norms and therefore, fit for issue under the Public Distribution System.

Comprehensive Foodgrains Policy

481. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to bring before the Parliament a Comprehensive Foodgrains Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any Committee has been constituted for this purpose; and

(d) if so, when such Committee was constituted and what are the terms of reference of the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) A high Level Committee has been constituted on 16th November, 2000 under the Chairmanship of Professor Abhijit Sen, ex-Chairman, Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices to formulate a long term grain policy for the country. The terms of reference of the Committee are as follows:

(i) Minimum Support Prices (MSP) and Price Support Operations

(ii) The Food Corporation of India (FACI) related issues

(iii) Functioning of the Public Distribution System (PDS)

(iv) Grain Policy regarding buffer stocks, open market intervention and export/import

(v) Allocation of foodgrains for rural development and other welfare programmes.

Disposal of maize lying in godowns in Andhra Pradesh

482 SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than 40,000 million tonnes of maize is lying in godowns in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking for quick disposal of the same to avoid huge loss to the exchequer;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Centre is proposing to export 50 lakh tonnes of wheat and 30 lakh tonnes of maize, rice etc. this year to off-load the stocks; and

(d) if so, the quality of rice and maize proposed to be exported from Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) No, Sir. However, a quantity of 42,900 MT of maize has been procured in the State of Andhra Pradesh during Kharif Marketing Season 2000-2001.

(b) It was decided to dispose of the maize @ Rs. 405/per quintal on "first come first serve basis". 42,000 MT of maize has already been disposed in Andhra Pradesh.